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stringy and bitter to the taste, but the fact that these plants grow wild also tends to make them despised. For instance the wild orchid (*icikanda*) gathered by the children in September is considered with special contempt. A passing Lunda bragging to some Bemba villagers about the superior wealth and civilization of his own people, clinched the argument by saying, 'In our country we just divorce our wives if they serve *icikanda* relish, whereas yours have to cook it every day.' The burrowing cricket (*nyense*) and the mice, moles, or small birds which little boys trap are also despised. 'Food for children and for women in the hunger months' is an expression often used of such foods with an expression of contempt.

European foods are used only in the villages round white settlements and then apparently entirely for their kudos value, or else their ease in preparation.[1] Such articles are chiefly limited to tea, coffee, sugar, bread, and sardines. They seemed to me to be eaten as extras, used for purposes of entertainment or display, rather than an essential part of the diet, but the habit may have become more common since my visit to the area in 1934. Then clerks and native storekeepers in the Kasama townships used to be carried trays of tea in the middle of the morning by their wives, and in a neighbouring village I have seen four young men, after eating their ordinary meal of porridge and relish, sit down to share a tin of sardines on a table spread in full view of the community and ornamented with empty whisky bottles. They were described as having a 'sundowner'. In the same year a successful dance club run by an enterprising native returned from the mines, sold lemonade at 3*d*. a glass (i.e. a whole day's wages) and scones made from white flour in preference to supplying beer. It is purely want of money which prevents the extension of such customs in the modern type of village.

Magico-Religious Attitudes to Food.

(*a*) *Food taboos.* The whole question of food taboos has bulked very largely in anthropological literature from the earliest days. Such ritual restrictions on diet seem to have struck the attention of European observers immediately, and there is no doubt that where a particular class of food is tabooed permanently to a whole community or to a large section of it, such as a clan, age-grade, or

[1] Bread is liked chiefly for the latter reason I think.

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cannot go so long without food as their elders and cook them extras when they can. Women who stay at home in the village all morning roast ground-nuts for the little children, or bake them sweet potatoes in season, while all the young people forage for what they can get from various relatives, or look for fruits in the bush. Mothers going to work may be seen carrying smouldering embers on a bark holder, ready to make small fires to roast maize cobs if they happen to be ripe in the gardens. But when food is short the children have to go without and expect to do so, and as they reach adolescence they begin to adopt the tribal belief that it is childish and undignified to be eating at all hours of the day. They finally express the ordinary adult preference for a meal late in the day rather than early. Some natives comment half disparagingly on the frequency of the white man's meals, although of course they admire the riches of a European who is constantly able to entertain his friends. The white man, chiefly the government official in this area, has now become a standardized figure in a series of folk-tales, and in these he is always represented as stopping constantly in the middle of any activity to take breakfasts or to drink tea. I once listened to some small boys playing at being Europeans—a very favourite game. The boy who was acting as the district officer sat lounging in an imitation chair made of branches and bark rope and repeatedly called, 'Bring food'. At last one of his fellows, acting servant, said aside in an aghast whisper, 'You can't ask for food again. We've only just brought it to you.' The 'white man's' answer was immediate. 'You know nothing about Europeans! That is just what they do all day—just sit and call, Boy! Bring me food.'

The chief meal of the Bemba varies tremendously both as to its time, its size, and the accessory foods that may be added to it during the day. These changes depend chiefly on the nature of the women's agricultural work from season to season, the monthly changes in the types of food available, and the time taken to cook them. For instance, at Pambalasa village (September 1930), the women were working late into the day to finish piling the branches for burning in their gardens. They were back late to the village, and got the single meal ready at about five. There was no early morning snack for most of them. At Candamukulu's village (April 1931), the women were harvesting, but at this time of the year the maize was ripe, and a few cobs could be quickly roasted at about 8 a.m. as well as the evening meal, which varied in individual cases

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who can afford to use European soap[1] delight to do so, and laundry work, in particular ironing, is considered a fashionable employment and one that is a mark of wealth and status. As such, it is chiefly in the hands of the men, many of whom learn to iron in domestic service. The husbands as the wage-earners are in any case considered sole owners of both their own and their wives' clothes,[2] and when the young man can acquire a bit of soap he likes to wash and iron in public outside his hut, surrounded by an admiring crowd of small boys. Thus the washing of clothes is women's work in the old-fashioned villages, but a male occupation under more modern conditions.

Women care for their children devotedly, but rarely give up any time to them exclusively. Babies are washed with warm water and massaged each morning and fed with gruel twice a day (cf. p. 69), but otherwise they are slung on their mothers' backs wherever they go—to work or to a beer-drink—but are not definitely 'amused' for any period of time or taken for walks. Small sisters do most of the work of supervising the younger children, and thus relieve the mothers.

Preparation of Meals.

If the housework proper, as we have described it, is not a very heavy drain on a woman's time, the preparation of meals and all the associated activities are far longer and more complicated than in our society. Wood for the fire has to be collected daily, or every two days, and this is woman's work. A man fetches wood for his chief, or for a European when required to. For his wife he will only cut down a suitable tree stem on the way back from gardening, and leave it for her to pick up on her return. She usually carries a bundle of dried wood six to eight feet long on her head. When a village is newly built dry firewood is plentiful near home, but in two or three years' time the supply is almost exhausted and the phrase 'she has gone for firewood' (*Aya ku nkuni*) may mean an expedition of an hour or so. On the copper belt the problem has already become acute and well-paid Africans employ servants to gather their wood, or try to buy faggots in the native market —one of the causes of the great increase in the cost of living in urban areas.

[1] This practically only occurs in the neighbourhood of a white store.

[2] He wears her clothes whenever he likes, and I have seen men strip their wives as a dramatic gesture in a quarrel threatening to lead to divorce.

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868 technical activities of their elders, apparently without ever asking questions or passing comments. They are not strenuously encouraged, as are our children, to learn any particular process, whether cooking or gardening. Of a child who showed no particular inclination to take part in any activity, or refused to do a job asked of it, I have heard mothers remark tolerantly that the little girl had not yet got sense (*takwata mano*) and then give up the attempt. In any skilled process like pot-making, the girl who shows promise at the first try is encouraged to go on, but one less successful is not induced to make another effort. 'She hasn't got sense', would again be a typical comment. Thus learning is a very gradual process among the Bemba with little drive or competitive spirit.

857 Children practise housecraft among themselves. Little girls of
868 5 and 6 dig holes in the ground, and sit opposite each other with imitation pestles making believe to pound grain. They carry tiny bundles of firewood and pretend to cook. In fact these are among their few make-believe games. When slightly older they beg for scraps of food, and go to the outskirts of the village where they make small huts of grass and here 'play at houses', cooking on small fire-stands in old pots or cast-off tins. This is a more elaborate game in which small boys pair off with small girls as married pairs. Later, at about 10 or 11, the girls form a community of their own, a bigger girl 'marrying' a smaller one and keeping permanently with her.[1] At this time the girls often make fire-stands on their mothers' verandas and cook more seriously, serving up the meal to friends or even elders. But in every case it is not the parents who are instructing, but the older child the younger. This is also true of the process of learning the different kinds of edible mushrooms or the wild spinaches in the bush.

868 By 13 or 14 a girl can cook all the usual dishes. There may be a difference to the enthusiast between one lump of *bwali* and another, and Bemba husbands declare emphatically that this is so, but to make fine smooth porridge is a matter of care, not of learning a complicated technical process, nor can the cooking of relish be considered difficult. The brewing of beer is never attempted by younger girls.

Just before marriage, at 14 or 15, I noticed the elder girls become casual and disinclined to help either in the house or

[1] I have only notes on this point from one village.